

GLOBAL ENDEAVORS

A NIFA publication

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Dear Colleagues...

Several years ago, our International Programs office (then a part of CSREES) distributed a newsletter aimed at updating readers concerning our agency's international activities. We also promoted it as a means for our university partners to share information concerning their overseas activities and innovative approaches to internationalizing programs here at home. Well, it's taken a while to resurrect this concept, but we're happy to announce...we're back! With a new format, a new name, and most importantly staff committed to roll these out on a regular basis, this time we're serious! But we still need your help. We want this to be a means for you to communicate with partners nationwide about *your* global endeavors. So, if you have news you would like to share or a topic you would like us to address in future issues, please contact our newest staff member, [Shree Khalid](#). These are very exciting times for all of us working in international agriculture and rural development and, with your participation, we hope to capture that in these pages. Recognizing that agriculture is global and our engagement abroad brings benefits back home, our office will soon become NIFA's new "Center for International Programs" (more about that in the next issue). In the meantime, we look forward to hearing from you!

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Organic Farming Seminar

Please Join Us For:

Tomorrow's Table: Organic Farming, Genetics and the Future of Food

Date: September 30, 2010

Location: 800 9th St. SW, Washington, DC (Waterfront Centre) Room 4103

Time: 12 p.m.

Speaker: Pamela Ronald

Webinar capabilities will be available for those who wish to join online.

For more details please contact Edwin Lewis or Shree Khalid.

A Guide to USDA's International Program

Did you know many offices within USDA support international work? This guide links you to their websites for full descriptions of those programs along with contact information. The Guide is actively updated, especially as reorganizations in NIFA and elsewhere occur.

Please send us your feedback on the [guide](#) in order to make it as helpful as possible.

Our Staff

[Hiram Larew](#)

[Mike McGirr](#)

[Patty Fulton](#)

[Edwin Lewis](#)

[Rose Gregory](#)

[Shree Khalid](#)

[Esther Carter](#)

Feed the Future

Like many Land-Grant colleagues, we at NIFA continue to be involved in and track the plans for this important U.S. global food security initiative. Designed to be country-led and then implemented using a holistic federal government approach, Feed the Future is meant to revive and bring focus to our international food and nutrition programs.

The U.S. higher education system will be a key partner in this effort and NIFA's International Programs (IP) staff is working to highlight the research, extension and teaching expertise that the diverse U.S. education system has to offer. With a mind towards mutual benefit, the IP team is also encouraging links, as appropriate and legislatively permitted, between Feed the Future and NIFA's domestic portfolio of programs.

SEE THE
FEED
CHANGE **FUTURE**



For more information please visit the [Feed the Future](#) website.

USDA education grant opens door to agriculture career opportunities

In 2004, as a junior at Montana State University (MSU), Ashley Williams knew she wanted to use her geography degree to make a difference internationally. She had no idea that agriculture would ever play a role in making that dream come true.

But that's what happened when Williams found herself in a small farming village of 1,000 people in Sanambele, Mali, after a chance encounter with MSU entomology professor Florence Dunkel. "Agriculture? I never even considered it. Now I work as a Forest Service hydrologist and collaborate with farmers on stream restoration projects to protect the environment," Williams said.

Dunkel was the recipient of a USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. She used the grant money to give her students experiential learning opportunities that would prepare them to enter the agricultural science workforce.

"The Challenge Grant unbound my students from the narrow definitions of agricultural education," Dunkel said.

From early research efforts, Williams learned that diarrhea, mainly from poor water quality, was a major contributor to childhood death. But when she got to Sanambele, the community had other ideas about what her mission should be. Working with the

Mali Agricultural Research Organization (IER), she learned through participatory, gender-based focus groups with local farmers that malaria was the most feared killer of children.

Williams credits Sidy Ba, a professor at Mali's agricultural college, and IER's Assa Kante with helping her ask the right questions in a culturally sensitive way, and for helping her get permission from village chiefs to conduct her surveys. She is now working with Ba on a project relating to diarrhea and water quality in villages near Mopti, Mali, the results of which they plan to publish. "Florence gives you a lot of freedom," Williams said. "Through her program, however, I developed my interest in science and learned how to conduct research that has carried me into graduate school and a future career in water quality."

Please contact [Jill Lee](#) for more information.

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International 4H Youth Development

Countries around the world are interested in developing the potential of younger generations. The U.S. 4-H Youth Development program has a considerable interest and track record in assisting these nations in their endeavors. Assuming that Feed the Future or other funding mechanisms could provide needed support and legal authorities, NIFA is poised to work with land-grant partners, USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service, the 4H Council and other stakeholders to offer advice to -- and learn from -- youth development leaders in other countries as they envision growing opportunities for future generations.

Please contact [Lisa Lauxman](#) for further details.



Peace Corps and eXtension

Recently, staff from NIFA, eXtension and Peace Corps collaborated to make eXtension available to agriculturally-focused Peace Corps volunteers around the world. Very often, volunteers need additional technical background on agricultural topics but lack ready access to it. By posting information on eXtension, NIFA and the Peace Corps hope to address this need. The "Ask the Expert" widget is predicted to be especially popular as it allows inquirers to receive expert advice from trained professionals in various fields of agriculture. NIFA looks forward to future collaborations with the Peace Corps.

Please contact [Hiram Larew](#) for more information.



Training, Research and Extension Mission in Haiti

From July 18-31, 2010 a NIFA coordinated team conducted an evaluation and review of needs to develop implementation plans for the vocational agriculture schools, research and development centers in Haiti. The team led by Kitty F. Cardwell, national program leader, NIFA, included Dennis Shannon, professor of agronomy, Auburn University, John Vreyens, director international programs, University of Minnesota, Suchet Louis, director (retired) International Programs, Tuskegee University and Louis Herns Marcelin, director Family and Community Research Center, University of Miami.

The Haitian Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Rural Development (MARNDP) proposes in their Country Investment Plan (CIP) to revitalize key services. Most physical infrastructure in agriculture, from regional research and training centers to laboratories for regulatory oversight, are in disrepair or are no longer functioning. A key element in rebuilding Haiti's agricultural sector will be strengthening the ecoles moyenne (middle schools) which develop the technical cadre of professionals to serve as extension agents, researchers and laboratory technicians.

The CIP calls for an evaluation of five of the vocational agriculture schools along with five regional research and development centers with the intent to revitalize and modernize the public sector technical support to agriculture.

The team is finalizing assessment report and proposed next steps for strategic implementation and financing. Recommendations are being made on both the physical and human resources needs.

Logistical assistance for the team was provided by Eugene Philhower, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service and James Woolley USAID-- Haiti and Jean Daniel Michel - director of the Department of Formation, MARNDP, Port au Prince, Haiti.

Please contact [Kitty Cardwell](#) for further details.

Secretary Calls on University Community to Encourage Employees to Serve as Agricultural Experts in Afghanistan and Iraq

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack hosted a conference call with leaders from more than 70 of the country's land-grant institutions on August 14, to request assistance in helping to rebuild the agricultural economies of Afghanistan and Iraq. The Secretary asked all of those on the line to "reach out to your respective university communities – the academic side, the research side and the extension side," to encourage experienced and eligible employees to apply to serve as Agriculture Experts with USDA in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"I'm asking folks today on this call to consider a very unique, important and somewhat difficult request," said Vilsack, "and that is to assist the United States government's efforts in helping to rebuild the agricultural economies of Afghanistan and Iraq."

The Secretary added, "We're looking for persons with technical skills in the areas of natural resource management and conservation, crop production, post-harvest management, animal husbandry, and extension."

Since 2003, USDA has fielded agricultural experts to Afghanistan and Iraq to serve as extension agents within the civilian-military field units called Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) operating in both countries. Currently, USDA has nearly 100 agricultural personnel serving in this capacity. While the majority of these individuals have volunteered for service from across USDA, others have come from land-grant institutions such as Colorado State University, the University of Florida, Florida A&M

University, the University of Georgia, the University of Missouri, the University of Nebraska, The Ohio State University, and Oregon State University.

USDA is working alongside Iraqis and Afghans, as well as U.S. government civilian experts from the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department of the Interior, and other federal agencies, to deliver high-impact assistance and bolster the agricultural sectors in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The U.S. government's strategy is focused on long-term sustainability – increasing productivity on the farm, providing support for markets and utilization through post-harvest infrastructure, improving agricultural credit and enhancing infrastructure along the market chain.

The Secretary requested qualified and interested applicants to apply by visiting [USAJOBS](#) and entering the keywords "USDA Iraq" or "USDA Afghanistan."

For more information please contact [Matt Herrick](#).



Meet our New Staff

[Edwin Lewis](#) has a focus on international extension programs. Edwin is also managing a new grants program – the Food Aid Nutrition Enhancement Program. Edwin spent 8 years with USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service where he held a variety of positions. He worked as an agricultural economist in their Horticultural and Tropical Products Division, carrying out market research in China and Taiwan and performing analysis on international trade agreements. He also served as an international development program manager, overseeing technical assistance efforts in such places as Indonesia, Bulgaria, Albania and several countries in Latin America and Africa. Most recently

Edwin worked as a Team Leader on FAS' Civil Rights staff. Edwin has received a B.S. in Agricultural Economics from Southern University. His Master's degree in Agricultural Economics and Ph.D. in Career and Technical Education both were received from Virginia Tech.

[Shree Khalid](#) recently received a BA from American University in U.S. foreign policy and joined NIFA's International Programs Office in May of this year through the Career Intern Program. Shree was previously part of NIFA's Office of Communications. She currently works on various projects, such as researching information and communication technologies as development models in various countries, organization of this newsletter, assistance on seminars, and various other tasks and research.